

## Demonstrating ESD: Workshops for Councils about How to Operate More Sustainably Program Evaluation Report: December 2005

### *Highlights of this Evaluation*

*"The greatest benefit I gained from the workshop was that ESD always seemed a vague concept which was difficult to put into practice, however this is no longer the case and the community generally will be the beneficiary."* Workshop participant.

In summary the *Demonstrating ESD: Workshops for Councils about How to Operate More Sustainably* Program achieved a number of important outcomes

1. The delivery of a series of workshops for 225 Local Government participants in total [50 Councillors] together with the development of ESD related training materials as summarised in the table below:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Products</b>	<b>Conducted in...</b>
<b>A. Half-day [three hour] Councillor Workshop*</b>	A three-hour program specifically for Councillors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workbook (also used for one-day program).</li> <li>• Activity Bank also shared with the one-day program.</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>• Evaluation form and report.</li> </ul>	Offered in Sydney, Parramatta, Newcastle and Wollongong. Sufficient numbers only for Sydney and Wollongong
<b>B. One-day Workshop for Councillors and Staff*</b>	A one-day program specifically for Councillors. See objectives below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workbook (also used for half-day program).</li> <li>• Activity Bank also shared with the half-day program.</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>• Evaluation form and report.</li> </ul>	Offered in twelve locations around NSW. Due to lack of numbers the workshops did not run in Albury or Dubbo
<b>C. Two-day workshop. Facilitating Change</b>	A two-day workshop conducted at the Quarantine Station, North Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workbook specifically developed for this program.</li> <li>• Activity Bank.</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>• Evaluation forms and report.</li> </ul>	Offered once to date in Sydney only. Proposed to offer again in 2006.
<b>D. Purpose Built ESD Workshops for specific Councils</b>	Specific local needs addressed in each workshop. Each workshop is different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific program designed and training activities developed</li> <li>• Related worksheets and PowerPoint developed.</li> <li>• Evaluation forms and report.</li> </ul>	Workshops held to date for City of Sydney and Bankstown Councils. Others in planning phase.
<b>E. Strategic Planning Workshop</b>	Workshop with LGSA and key informants from local government to plan future activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written summary of input provided to the LGSA</li> </ul>	Held on 30 Nov 2005

2. There are some significant issues in the way in which local government encompasses ESD/Sustainability made visible by this program.

While all Councils represented at the workshops met their legislative obligations by including ESD in their management plans and often in major Council policy, it is clear that in many cases this does not drill down so that practices, procedures and operations of Councils are undertaken sustainably. Most workshop participants found this to be the most challenging aspect of integrating ESD into their work. Beyond individual projects, there were relatively few case studies of ESD/sustainability across all aspects of Council activity.

3. Almost all participants in the workshops found them to be of very high quality.

The evaluation of the workshops [A and B above] was extremely positive. Unprompted feedback from all but one of the 132 workshop participants indicated that the workshops were of high quality. (61%) found them thought provoking; 58% identified that they were relevant; 38% found the workshops valuable; 51% found them interesting; and a further 52% identified them as enjoyable.

4. There was a substantial shift in the level of understanding of staff and Councillors as a result of the workshop.

Across all participants 55% indicated that the workshop had assisted them "significantly/a lot" to understand their obligations under the legislation. They gained real assistance in how to implement these obligations and indicated that they would review activity and processes to better meet these obligations

5. There was a substantial impact on the behavioural intent of the participants in the workshop, but to date there has been limited evidence of improved integration of sustainability.

Prior to the workshop 68% of Councillors reviewed decisions (often/always) from a sustainability perspective. Despite this high base this had grown to 86% as a result of the workshop. Prior to the workshop, 54% of staff indicated that they would do this "always" or "most of the time." This grew to 88% after the workshop. A further 10% indicated that they would do this for major decisions.

The three-month follow-up survey indicated that while respondents had integrated sustainability into their own activities, there had been relatively little impact on whole of Council activity.

6. There is a real need for continued efforts to promote more in-depth, strategic integration of ESD/sustainability across all Councils.

A number of recommendations are made to the LGSA, which propose further activity in this area. This builds on and extends the major efforts that have been undertaken to date.